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FM AMEMBASSY OTTAWA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3173
INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY DUBLIN
AMEMBASSY TOKYO

C O N F I D E N T I A L OTTAWA 04824

E.O. 12356: DECL: OADR
TAGS: PTER EI IN
SUBJECT: AIRLINE BOMBINGS

11. (CONFIDENTIAL - ENTIRE TEXT)

12. AMBASSADOR ROBINSON OPENED HIS CALL TODAY ON DR. FRED DOUCET, SENIOR POLICY ADVISOR FOR THE CANADIAN PRIME MINISTER, WITH AN EXPRESSION OF U.S. SYMPATHY AND CONCERN OVER THE TRAGIC AIRLINE INCIDENTS THIS PAST WEEKEND. (THE AMBASSADOR HAD BEEN SCHEDULED TO MAKE REPRESENTATIONS ON OTHER SUBJECTS TO THE OFFICE OF THE PRIME MINISTER.) REPORTS ON THE EXPLOSION OF THE AIR INDIA BOEING 747 OFF THE COAST OF IRELAND, THE GREATEST LOSS OF CANADIAN LIVES IN COMMERCIAL FLYING HISTORY, AND THE EXPLOSION OF A BOMB HIDDEN IN THE LUGGAGE OF A CP AIR FLIGHT TO TOKYO, DOMINATE TODAY'S CANADIAN PRESS.

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13. DR. DOUCET EXPRESSED APPRECIATION FOR THE AMBASSADOR'S STATEMENT OF CONCERN IN BEHALF OF THE U.S. GOVERNMENT. HE MADE THREE POINTS IN RESPONSE. FIRST, HE SAID THAT "THE TARGETS FOR THE BOMBINGS WERE NOT CLEAR AND CLEAN," GIVEN THE VARIED BACKGROUND OF THE PASSENGERS. THE GOC CANNOT UNDERSTAND WHY SIKH TERRORISTS, IF THEY ARE IN FACT RESPONSIBLE FOR THE INCIDENTS, WOULD HAVE CHOSEN THIS UNTARGETED MEANS TO MAKE A POLITICAL POINT. SECOND, DOUCET SAID THAT "SOMETHING MUST HAVE BEEN ORCHESTRATED" SINCE IT SEEMS UNLIKELY THAT TWO SUCH INCIDENTS COULD TAKE PLACE BY COINCIDENCE WITHIN TWELVE HOURS. THIRD, HE SAID THAT ALL AVAILABLE EVIDENCE DOES POINT TO USE OF A BOMB ON AIR INDIA 182.

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14. WHEN ASKED BY THE ECONOMIC MINISTER-COUNSELOR WHAT THE GOC PLANS TO DO IN FOLLOWING UP ON THESE APPARENT TERRORIST ACTS, DR. DOUCET SAID THAT THE PRIME MINISTER WOULD PROBABLY CONVENE A SPECIAL MEETING OF THE CANADIAN CABINET FOR LATER TODAY. (THE PRIME MINISTER IS NOW AT HIS SUMMER RESIDENCE ABOUT 20 MINUTES OUTSIDE OTTAWA.) ACCORDING TO DOUCET, PRIME MINISTER MULRONEY WILL PROBABLY USE THAT CABINET MEETING TO REVIEW THE EVENTS OF THE WEEKEND AND OPTIONS FOR ACTION. HE SAID THAT MULRONEY MIGHT ISSUE A STRONG STATEMENT, INDICATING THAT, AS DOUCET PUT IT, "CANADA WILL NOT TAKE THIS KIND OF ATTACK SITTING DOWN" AND THAT THE GOC WILL TAKE STERN ACTION. WHAT ACTION, DOUCET DID NOT AND COULD NOT INDICATE. HE ALSO SAID THAT THE PRIME MINISTER WOULD SEEK TO REASSURE THE CANADIAN PUBLIC THAT THE GOC HAS TIGHTENED AIRPORT SECURITY AND THAT CANADIANS SHOULD MAINTAIN THEIR TRAVEL PLANS.

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15. DR. DOUCET CALLED THE ECONOMIC MINISTER-COUNSELOR SUBSEQUENTLY EARLY AFTERNOON, JUNE 24, TO CONFIRM THAT THE PRIME MINISTER WILL INDEED MEET WITH KEY MINISTERS TODAY AT 3 P.M. AND MAKE A PUBLIC STATEMENT AT 4 P.M. HE ADDED THAT PRECISE INFORMATION ON THE CAUSE OF THE APPARENT EXPLOSION ABOARD AIR INDIA 182 REMAINS SKETCHY, BUT THAT THERE IS INCREASING EVIDENCE TO SUGGEST A CONNECTION BETWEEN THE FATE OF THAT AIRLINE AND THE BOMB EXPLODED AT TOKYO'S INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT.

ROBINSON